

Iowa Department on Aging

Director Donna Harvey

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Iowa Department on Aging Suggests Gifts That Help Older or Disabled Iowans Remain Independent & Active as They Age

During the Holiday Season Iowans are Encouraged to Give to Their Favorite Older or Disabled Iowan

(Des Moines, IA) Today Iowa Department on Aging Director Donna Harvey encouraged Iowans to give to their older or disabled family members and friends during this holiday season.

“As we approach the gift-giving season, it is important to give back to our older or disabled friends and family members who have given so much to us over the years. We’re asking that those who are giving gifts to older or disabled Iowans think about the type of gift they give and consider the non-traditional gifts that may help them remain independent and active in their communities,” Director Harvey stated.

A few ideas that may brighten the holiday for older or disabled Iowans could include:

- A membership to a local health club (check for special discounts)
- The gift of friendship: call, write, e-mail and visit on a regular basis
- For Iowans 60 or older, a week or monthly lunch ticket for congregate meals (check your local Area Agency on Aging)
- Exercise bands with instruction for strength training
- A pedometer for measuring distance while walking or a walking stick to assist them
- A ‘coupon’ redeemable for you to run errands with or for them a few times a month
- A book of stamps and pre-addressed mailing labels to frequently mailed addresses
- Tickets for 2 or a season pass to the theatre, a play, a movie, a concert or a museum (include transportation)
- Arrangements to take them to weekly faith-based activities
- Pre-paid cab or bus ‘tickets’ for rides when they want them
- A large print magazine subscription, large print books, and/or audio books
- Low vision products such as a large TV remote, magnifiers, large print calendars, large face playing cards, or large button telephone
- Install devices or home modifications to help prevent falls or accidents (such as hand rails)

- Gift certificates to grocery stores, restaurants, hair salon or barber
- Gift certificate for monthly house cleaning
- Offer to rake leaves, shovel snow, or mow the lawn on a regular basis throughout the year
- Prepay their utility bill for a month (electric, cable, oil, or telephone)
- A gas card for travel or prepaid phone calling card for long-distance phone calls to family and friends
- Calendar with family birthdays clearly marked
- Cook extra meals and place in individual freezable containers
- Wash their windows inside and out
- Write a letter telling them how you feel about them and memories you have shared with them
- Subscription to their local newspaper
- Offer yourself as a willing, cheerful helper for the day to do chores (change light bulbs, put a new battery in the smoke detector, change the furnace filter etc...)
- Install devices to prevent crime or vandalism (deadbolts, door hole viewer, alarm system)
- Arrange for energy saving improvements like installing weather stripping, storm doors/windows
- Deliver a fresh basket of seasonal fruit or healthy snacks in person a few times over the year
- Fill a basket with craft projects they can have fun with
- Give them the gift of taking them to breakfast or lunch once a month

“We can help make this holiday season special for one of our older or disabled family, friends or neighbors by showing them our ‘Iowa spirit’ of kindness and generosity,” Director Harvey concluded.

For more information on the Iowa Department on Aging (IDA) go to:
www.aging.iowa.gov or call:
 1-800-532-3213.

The mission of the Iowa Department on Aging is to develop a comprehensive, coordinated and cost-effective system of long-term living and community support services that help individuals maintain health and independence in their homes and communities.

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